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Ninth Annual Report,

of the

EXTENSION EDITOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Theme: FEDERAL-STATE TEAMWORK IN MEETING LOCALIZED COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Effective communication in an extension program geared to the needs and wants of the farm family is a concern of every member of the Federal-State-County Extension Service team.

"All of us in extension work are in the business of communicating," C. M. Ferguson, Administrator of the Federal Extension Service, has repeatedly emphasized.

The General plan was to examine firsthand the information objectives and operations in such major problem areas as speedier dissemination of research results, marketing, farm and home unit approach, and home demonstration work.

Three important principles guided the thinking of the Extension Editor Advisory Committee in its discussions of common information problems:

1. The obligation of all extension workers to communicate effectively.
2. The necessity of continuing to gear extension work to local needs as effectively as possible.
3. The importance of Federal-State-local teamwork.

With these principles in mind, the Committee makes several recommendations and statements affecting both Federal and State information work.

TRAINING

The extension information worker has two definite responsibilities: disseminating useful information through mass media, and training other Extension personnel in the effective use of communications media and training aids. By spending more time on training the information worker can multiply his own effectiveness and service. Extension workers need the specialized training which the information specialist can give.

The Committee recommends:

1. That both State and Federal Extension Service information workers plan to bring this training work and production work more nearly into balance.
2. That both State and Federal Extension Service workers intensify the training of Extension personnel in agricultural and home economics communications.

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The Committee commends the Federal Extension Service for its policy of emphasizing the job of training as the major function of a specialist, whether he be an information specialist or in some other field. Administrator Ferguson, in discussing this policy, said: "The people who do information work probably have a far greater opportunity in the field of training than in the field of service."

THE FARM AND HOME UNIT APPROACH

It is recognized by this Committee that the Farm and Home Unit Approach in Extension is intended to deal primarily with people, not with things. The approach is, therefore, more than a demonstration or a project. It is an attempt to consider under one over-all encompassing effort the entire farm, with its economy, its home and the rural family which it feeds and shelters. In preparing information to help guide this family in producing sufficient income to live in comfort and security, it is felt that emphasis must be placed on supplying good management ideas which the individual family can then adjust to its own needs and situation to help it realize family hopes and desires.

The Committee feels that the farm and home unit approach, although not new, offers a most effective device in accomplishing the objectives of Extension work. Although the details of the operation of the approach may vary from State to State, the Committee makes several recommendations concerning the part that informational and educational aids play in the approach and the problems and opportunities information staffs face as a result. We recommend:

1. That full use be made of informational and educational aids in this approach. Such aids include not only general information for the public but also materials to be used directly with farm-family co-operators. This is essential to the success of this intensive method of doing extension work.
2. That additional personnel and funds be provided for information, to meet the new demands which this intensive method of extension teaching places on present information staffs. Additional personnel and funds have been provided for other extension units involved in the Farm and Home Unit approach. In most States informational personnel have not been added, or at least not in proportion to staff and budget expansions made elsewhere to take care of expanded activities.

Unless additional informational support is provided, there seem to be only two alternatives:

- a. Carrying on the farm and home unit approach with limited information support; and
- b. redirecting information efforts, on the basis of demands and personnel, to eliminate some present activities.

The Committee strongly feels that neither of these alternatives is to the best interests of the Extension program.

3. That the Extension Editor be a member of the State Farm and Home Unit Approach committee, and that he be given administrative support for his activities in this regard. To provide effective and complete informational support to the approach, the Extension Editor needs to be a part of the over-all planning and development phases of this method of extension work. Membership on Farm and Home Unit Approach committees will not only develop the Editor's interest but will also help him to plan informational support for the approach.
4. That each State Extension Service develop a long-range information program with year-by-year and month-by-month jobs outlined. Results of the Farm and Home Unit Approach will often not be felt with full force for many years. An important measure of its success will be the degree of change on the farm and in the home. Making long-time information plans now will insure, for example, that photos will be taken to document present farm situations which can be used several years later as part of "before-after" comparisons.
5. That the Federal Extension Service expand its program for providing training and background materials in information to support the Farm and Home Unit Approach. This should include an idea exchange whereby the Federal Extension Service would collect information ideas and materials from the various States and circulate them as rapidly and frequently as possible to the States. Each State should send information materials to the Federal office for this purpose. This plan would give to all States useful ideas and would encourage State Extension workers to help in lending information support to the Farm and Home Unit Approach.

MARKETING INFORMATION

The Committee agrees with the Extension Task Force Committee on Marketing that the Extension Service, in enlarging and intensifying its work in marketing, faces serious communications problems. These revolve around the need to (1) quickly reach huge audiences primarily in large urban areas; (2) to furnish specialized marketing information to farmers; and (3) to provide specialized marketing information to those who handle and market farm products.

To meet these problems we recommend:

1. That the USDA and the states review their information work and communication training programs in terms of the needs of these specific audiences and of the mass communication media.
2. That a better balance between the production and marketing information work be achieved, particularly in the information offices of the Land-Grant Colleges.
3. That the Federal Extension Service and the states also consider expanded information work in marketing as a public relations tool.

Comprehensive and factual communications coverage of the marketing story can build better public relations for agriculture.

4. That Extension information workers become more familiar with the aims and methods of the marketing program, and that information workers and marketing specialists make specific plans for cooperation. There are promising opportunities for information and marketing people to establish mutually beneficial relationships.
5. That information participation be encouraged in marketing workshops, both regional and national, and especially in workshops where information methods are studied or considered.

COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH

To increase their net incomes and improve their way of living, farm families will need to follow closely and accept readily the scientific practices that will increase their efficiency and productivity. To make this possible, the USDA and the states need more facts on how to reach farm people with the results of scientific research and how to win acceptance for improved practices.

We subscribe to the statement on communications research made by ARS Administrator Byron Shaw that "there is probably just as much need for this as for research on beef cattle." He and other USDA representatives pointed out that such research can be undertaken either by the Experiment Station or by the Extension Service as evaluation studies. Communications research in the States might also be a cooperative effort between Experiment Station and Extension personnel and between editors and others specially trained in research and evaluation studies.

To be acceptable to the Office of Experiment Stations, a communications research proposal should:

1. Have the approval of the director of the state Experiment Station.
2. Be something more than a simple survey.
3. Pinpoint a specific area to be covered rather than a general broad field.
4. Draw upon cooperators from such allied areas as sociology and psychology.
5. Indicate the funds, the amount of help, and the specially trained help that the project will require.
6. Follow accepted research standards and procedures.

HOME ECONOMICS INFORMATION

More and more rural and urban women are looking to home economics extension for information. In general, this will mean a need for much more extensive and more effective use of the mass media. Therefore the Committee recommends:

1. That each state and the Federal Extension Service consider bringing together appropriate information and home economics workers for a thorough-going review of significant home economics subject matter. The goal should be to work out a definite plan for informational support of the home economics extension program.
2. That specialized training of home-economics personnel in communications methods be considered by the States. Such home-economics information training should result in better public understanding of the program as well as effective use of timely and significant subject matter. Such training also can be effective in developing a more complete appreciation by information and home economics workers of each other's problems.

4-H CLUB WORK

In view of the many special national 4-H observances and events in all areas of 4-H activity, any consolidation will be a step in the right direction. Such consolidations should result in more effective use of personnel engaged in information work.

It is recommended that all possible consolidations of 4-H national events be considered.

NEED FOR REPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

Reports of the achievements of families who have changed practices as a result of Extension work provide forceful teaching materials as well as impressive proof of the fundamental value of Extension. More reports from such families should be found and used. In like manner, similar stories of neighborhoods, communities and even counties are available.

The editor should search out and prepare such reports (in addition to annual reports) for use locally and for the Federal Extension Service. The Service uses these in presentations to explain its work to the general public as well as to other governmental agencies. This supporting evidence is badly needed as a method of demonstrating the effectiveness of use of Extension funds.

This Committee therefore recommends that State information workers keep this need in mind, using such stories in their own States and also sending them to the Federal Extension Service throughout the year. This is becoming of vital importance, and it is recommended that all editors cooperate fully.

REORGANIZATION OF USDA INFORMATION SERVICES

This Committee commends the progress that has been made in reorganizing USDA information services in the interest of greater efficiency and economy. Moreover, we commend the Office of Information and the various departmental information services for an attitude that fosters closer cooperation with the Land-Grant Colleges. There is need to further strengthen practices which encourage a reflection of the needs of the states in publications, news services, radio, television, visual aids, and other communications aspects of USDA programs.

IMPROVING USDA INFORMATION FOR STATE USES

The Committee recognizes the responsibilities of the states for incorporating USDA information in their communications services. Our effectiveness in disseminating factual information on USDA research and agricultural programs could be improved by the following:

1. Establishing a system that will at least regionalize this information. State editors frequently get subject matter from the Department which has little or no local application. USDA information prepared on a regional basis could, however, be easily adjusted to local situations by land-grant college editors. Thus farm people and others could be kept much better informed on significant research and important USDA policies and programs.
2. Continuance of the advance release service from the Office of Information, but discontinuation of routine publication announcements as part of this service.
3. Complete revision and strengthening of the "Special to Extension Editor" release service. To be effective, such a service must include stories of major research findings and other significant developments written in acceptable news style. Such stories should contain top-quality subject matter and specific information of value to farm people and/or the general public. Only on this basis will local newspaper, magazine, and radio editors and county extension agents use these stories. Home-economics information in the "Special to Extension Editor" service should also be improved.
4. Thorough study and revision of "Food and Home Notes" to include more significant home economics information.
5. Discontinuation of the present "Farm Flashes," incorporating the information instead into the "Special to Extension Editors" Service. In this way extension editors will be able to use available information from USDA sources in many more informational channels than the single channel now intended by "Farm Flashes."

AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

The Committee believes that the visual aids work of the USDA is more effective now than ever before. It recommends that the photographic files of the Department be supplemented as soon as possible with new photographs on many agricultural and home economics subjects.

It further recommends that the Department continue the policy of contacting Land-Grant College editors and representatives of USDA agencies when scheduling a photographer to take pictures in the various states. This procedure contributes to the effectiveness of the photographer and results in more useful pictures for many purposes.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

For the purpose of determining the
amount of land in the State of
California which is suitable for
the production of cotton

the following table is prepared

TABLE I

Area of land in California

suited for the production of cotton

by county, according to the

report of the United States

Geological Survey, 1898

Area of land in California

suited for the production of cotton

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Geological Survey, 1898

This Committee favors the proposed audio-visual exchange between the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the states. It is being created at the request of the states.

The first exchange packet is now in production, and the Federal Extension Service will underwrite the cost of the first three issues. After that the states will be asked to buy the copies they order at a maximum cost of \$1 per copy.

It is recommended that the states support the audio-visual exchange package both financially and with the contribution of useful ideas. Without this double support this exchange program cannot be successful nor can it be continued.

PUBLICATIONS

In reference to publications this committee strongly endorses this recommendation in the report of the USDA Publications Review Committee:

"That the Cooperative Extension Service, in cooperation with the Office of Information, explore the possibility of developing procedures for a continuous sampling of the subject matter needs of the public for State and USDA popular publications, this information to be used in planning publications needed (a) by each State, if desired, (b) by the USDA for use within various regions of the country, and (c) by USDA for use within the Nation as a whole. Data from such surveys, and from information on Land-Grant College publications requirements for Extension use, should constitute the nucleus of the USDA popular publications program. Other subjects which research brings to light or which are demanded by USDA administrative and educational needs would be added."

The Committee further suggests a mechanism be established by which each State could report to the USDA its publication plans and could in turn have the help of the Federal Extension Service in circulating to it similar plans or lists from other States.

The Committee commends the various editors of USDA publications for:

- (a) The marked improvement in the quality of their bulletins.
- (b) Establishing an effective publication notification service to the States.

APPRECIATION

1. The Committee thanks Secretary of Agriculture Ezra T. Benson and Assistant Secretary Ervin L. Peterson (Federal-States Relations) for their sincere interest in information work in the Department and in the Land-Grant Colleges and for their discussions of communications with the Committee.
2. The Committee thanks Administrator C. M. Ferguson for his special conference with Extension editors and for the opportunity it gave for a very useful exchange of ideas and discussion of the operations and philosophy of extension work. We value highly his keen appreciation of the values and problems of Extension information work.

3. We commend Lyle Webster, director of the Office of Information, and members of his staff for their efforts in building a stronger partnership of all the information services of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Land-Grant Colleges. We express our appreciation, too, for his inauguration of new services to the States and for the improvement and revamping of present services.
4. The Committee especially commends Lester Schlup and his entire staff, both for their continuing services and help to the States, for their efforts in arranging an excellent program, and for their hospitality to this Committee.

EXTENSION EDITOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 1955:

William B. Ward, New York, Chairman
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THE EXTENSION EDITOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

THE EXTENSION EDITOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE consists of editors representing various areas of the country. It was invited to Washington to review current programs and make recommendations for improvements in several fields including:

- (1) Problems common to staff members working on the information program of the Cooperative Extension Service.
- (2) Relationships between Extension information workers (Federal and State) and other U. S. Department of Agriculture agencies responsible for reaching farm people with information.
- (3) Dissemination of information through Extension channels, taking into consideration the activities of the Federal, State, and county extension services in using public communications media.

THE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS of the committee are aimed at a smoother and more effective functioning of the information program conducted by the Cooperative Extension Service.

THIS IS THE NINTH YEAR that the Extension Editor Advisory Committee has joined with the Federal Extension Service and other branches of the U. S. Department of Agriculture in discussing their common information problems and recommending solutions. The last Extension Editor Advisory Committee meeting was held in 1951.

A COMMITTEE of experiment station editors met simultaneously at the request of the Office of Experiment Stations. Several joint sessions of the two groups were arranged on topics of common interest.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OFFICE OF THE
DIRECTOR

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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